

*The*  
RELIGIOUS  
QUESTION  
IN SPAIN

*by*  
*Richard Pattee*

**T**HIS pamphlet presents an analysis of the present situation of Protestantism in Spain. It includes comment on the nature of the Spanish attitude regarding religious freedom and traces the evolution of legislation on the subject.

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RICHARD PATTEE

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## C O N T E N T S

1. The Background .....	3
2. The Present Status .....	14
3. The State of Protestantism .....	22
4. The Catholic Reaction .....	36
5. The So-called Protestant Disabilities .....	40
6. The "Anti-Protestant Incidents" .....	47
Appendix .....	56





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## 1. THE BACKGROUND

A FEW isolated incidents set off a reaction around the world regarding the status of religious freedom in contemporary Spain. The fire has been concentrated principally on the Spanish regime as hostile to all non-Catholic religious activity and as especially unfavorable to any form of Protestantism, either that existing in Spain already or that which may be brought in through missionary efforts. The analysis of the present situation of Protestantism in Spain requires some comment on the nature of the Spanish attitude on the subject and the reason why a degree of tension has come about since the end of the Civil War.

The distinguished British Hispanist, E. Allison Peers, in his book *Spain, the Church and the Orders*, opens his comments on the status of Protestantism with the remark that this particular form of Christianity has found only the slightest acceptance among the Spanish people and this in large measure thanks to foreign missions. "There seems to be in the Spaniard an instinctive aversion from it." This statement comes, incidentally, from one of the leading Hispanic scholars of our time and an outstanding Anglican. He quotes in this connection the famous expression of Emilio Castelar, in 1869. This was a Spaniard who reflected as closely as any of his contemporaries the secularism of nineteenth century Europe. "I belong," he said, "not to the world of theology and faith but to that of philosophy and reason. But if I were ever to return to the world I have left, I would certainly not

ent sects themselves as communicants. Twenty-five societies cared for this Evangelical activity in the country and there were missions maintained by groups in the United States, Britain, Northern Ireland, Holland, Germany, Sweden and France. There were an estimated 166 local churches with 265 workers of whom 142 were Spaniards.

The statistics on Protestants in Spain is imprecise since the Government was never aware of the need for classifying them in a special group. Even Catholic authorities were of little value in determining the exact number and it was necessary to depend on the reports of a certain number of parish priests who included information on Protestant activity within their jurisdiction. The non-Spanish press has made various estimates over the last few years when the question has become of some significance. This may be summarized as follows:

*Grientierung* (Zurich, Switzerland, May 3, 1947)  
20 to 30,000

*The New York Times* (November 24, 1947) about  
15,000

*La Vie Intellectuelle* (Paris, July, 1948) 25,000

*Chicago Daily Tribune* (September 11, 1948) 30,000

*The Star* (Montreal, Canada, January 19, 1949)  
20,000

This number includes, of course, all those, both foreign and nationals who consider themselves Protestant. It makes no distinction between practicing and non-practicing members of the various evangelical denominations. Catholic sources in Spain in more recent months have undertaken to investigate the problem.

*Ecclesia*, organ of Spanish Catholic Action (May 21, 1949), is convinced that the number of Spanish Protestants does not surpass two to three thousands.

If we take 20,000 as a reasonable figure, it would be entirely proper to assume that half at least and probably more are foreigners. That would leave more or less 10,000 Spanish Protestants. The number of Protestants then becomes exactly 0.072 percent of the population, the proportion of Spanish Protestants, 0.036 percent of the total of 27,761,528 according to the *Anuario Estadístico de España* (Madrid, 1947). If the Spanish Protestants are represented in various phases of the national life in exact proportion to their total number, then there would be approximately 1,536 Protestant children in primary school out of a total of 4,266,878 children in all grades of the school system.

This assumes that all Protestant children were in school, a generous estimate since the Protestants of Spanish nationality have been shown to belong to the more humble classes. In other words, the campaign abroad regarding the Spanish Protestants and their allegedly violated rights in school and elsewhere is based on the situation of a minority so tiny as to be completely lost in the total population.

If the statistics of the armed forces are taken into account and the same proportion is applied as in the case of the schools, on the basis of 10,000 Spanish Protestants, we find that the maximum number of recruits or conscripts could not be greater than 365. Now 365 Protestant conscripts doing their military service along with the total number of nearly a million hardly constitutes a problem. The Protestants in the service become some-



thing like members of the more exotic sects that entered the United States Army, or the possibility that a few Moslems might find their way into the armed forces of this country. No one would seriously demand that legislation and regulations be drafted for their benefit and with them in mind. The numerical situation of the Protestants in Spain explains as much as anything the absence of special facilities for them and the exercise of their religion.

The number of practicing Protestants is even smaller. The records show that in such places as Tortosa, the evangelical community was 20; in Vich, 12 persons; and in Madrid on the occasion of a special religious festivity, the Protestant church brought together 531 including foreigners.

The report of Araujo and Grubb includes many illuminating observations on the status of Protestantism during the period from 1910 to 1930. "During these years there has hardly been noted any progress in Evangelical work in Spain." The work of the various Protestant churches was spoken of by these authors as "exotic" since most of the ministers were paid by foreign committees. In listing the various geographical areas of the country the report comes up with the conclusion that outside the Mediterranean coast, in almost every other region: Catalonia, Leon, Andalucía and Galicia, "much of the work has been very disappointing." In spite of this disappointment, it is not without importance to note that the Protestant churches held property to the value of well over five and a half million pesetas in 1933—at a time when the peseta far exceeded its present depreciated value.

The present situation of Protestants in Spain must be examined somewhat in the light of their status over the past century and especially with reference to the evolution of legislation in Spain on the religious problem. The idea of religious toleration was introduced into the Constitution of 1856, article 14 of which stated that "No Spaniard or foreigner shall be persecuted for his religious beliefs as long as he does not give expression to them through acts against religion itself." This somewhat curiously worded precept is in itself typically Spanish. Just how it was to be applied was never determined since the Constitution of that year did not go into effect. The Constitution of 1869 was another thing entirely. This provision was the cause for the unleashing of an enormous anti-Catholic persecution, the importance of which will be suggested in a moment. The exact text of this article is as follows:

"Public and private worship by foreigners belonging to other religious dominations is guaranteed with no other limitations than those imposed by the universal rules of morality and law. If there are any Spanish citizens who profess a faith other than the Catholic, the provisions of this paragraph are applicable to them."

This law implies quite plainly that almost all the Protestants in Spain at the time were foreigners. The very existence of non-Catholic Spaniards, at least as an organized group, was looked upon as a rarity.

During this period of the First Republic, as well as afterwards, the Church lived through a most difficult time. This is not the place to examine the long story of the persecution of the Catholic Church in Spain. The

story is important of course, because it is a necessary part of the rectification of the idea that Spain was a country closed to all ideas not Catholic and totally in the grip of a fanatical and ruthless clergy and hierarchy. The very opposite was the case. The persecution of the Orders, the dissolution of the Society of Jesus, the confiscation of Church properties, were all carried out long before the Revolution of 1931 and before the name of Franco had ever been heard of. In other words, the notion sometimes expressed that Protestantism is the first challenge, so to speak, to the hegemony of Catholicism in Spain, is sheer nonsense. The Church was having an extremely rough time of it from the day that Ferdinand VII returned to the throne and the unpleasantness of 1931-36 was merely the culmination of this painful process.

The Constitution of 1869 was short-lived. With the return of the monarchy, the new fundamental law was drawn up in the form of the Constitution of 1876 which was destined to endure for the next fifty-five years. Catholicism was declared the official religion of the State but liberty of conscience and the right to private worship were guaranteed. Article 11 of this document reads textually:

“No one shall be molested on Spanish territory because of his religious opinions nor because of the private practice of his beliefs as long as respect for Christian morality is maintained. Public ceremonies or demonstrations will not be allowed except those of the official religion of the State.”

The problem of this article is the same problem that arises under the present Spanish regime. Precisely what is understood by “private worship” and what does the



expression forbidding public worship really mean? The royal ordinance of October 23, 1876 clarifies the idea to some extent. Public manifestations of religion were taken to mean street processions, the display of the emblems or insignia of a religion in public places, posters and publicity material or, in short, acts of worship taking place outside the buildings or temples destined for that purpose. These provisions remained in force until the fall of the monarchy in 1931, in spite of innumerable efforts to modify them.

Among the first acts of the new Republican government in 1931 was the abrogation of all of the laws heretofore in force regarding the Church. The Concordat was denounced and entirely new legislation introduced. The new Constitution in Article 27 stated that:

“Liberty of conscience and the right to practice freely any religion is guaranteed in Spanish territory—. All religious groups may carry on worship in private. The public manifestations of religion must be authorized in each case by the Government.”

The legislation passed by the Cortes during the turbulent months of 1931 was almost without exception unfavorable to the Catholic Church. Such measures as the secularization of the cemeteries, civil marriage and the like were approved. The great wave of persecution against the Church began on the historic 11th of May when the entire country was the scene of innumerable burnings and destruction of religious properties. In general the Protestants in Spain had no reason to complain of the new legislation. It went far beyond anything that had prevailed heretofore. For the first time, there was a

chance for obtaining something like public acknowledgment of their beliefs. There was unquestionably a certain degree of support by the Evangelical bodies in Spain of the left wing parties that had been responsible for the legislation just mentioned. As late as 1936, on the eve of the decisive elections of February of that year, the President of the Alliance of Evangelical Churches in Spain, in the official publication of that group, *España Evangélica* (January 30, 1936) recommended that Spanish Protestants vote for the Left because "from the temporal point of view, this is our only hope for freedom to proselytize." The fact that many of the Protestant bodies in Spain did support the Left so solidly led to the melancholy reflection contained in the *Carta Circular a los Evangélicos Españoles* in 1945 that "many of the Churches and many of our brethren have had to pay dearly and continue to pay for this close association with Leftist elements who could not fail, in the long run, to do injury to our cause."

But the impression must not be given that Protestantism flourished in Spain during the Second Republic or that the various forces that contributed to the collapse of constituted government were in any sense sympathetic to Protestantism as against Catholicism. The evidence is absolutely overwhelming that the major forces in the Spain of the Republic were simply anti-religious, and included Catholics, Protestants and Moslems in more or less the same category. There were cases of anti-Protestant violence. Araujo and Grubb, the two Evangelical observers already quoted, observe that in October, 1932 there was an attack on the Protestant Church at Marín in Galicia, the largest Evangelical community in the

nation. The attempt to destroy this church was resisted not only by the members of the congregation, but with the aid of many of their Catholic fellow-townsmen (Araujo and Grubb, *op. cit.* p. 46) .

## 2. THE PRESENT STATUS

With the close of the Civil War and the advent of the new regime, it was expected that the whole religious problem would be reexamined carefully. There were indications of this in the decision of June 7, 1941 with the Holy See to maintain a number of the articles contained in the Concordat of 1851. During the war itself, the Nationalists had given an assurance that their proposed regime was not to be one of intolerance and persecution. The statement of the Duke of Alba in November, 1937 emphasized this point. The situation was somewhat vague prior to the drafting and approval of the *Fuero de los Españoles*, translated loosely as the "Spaniard's Charter". This document was unanimously passed by the Cortes on July 13, 1945 and contains, in 36 articles, a statement as to the rights of the citizenry as well as their duties. It is not a Constitution since it does not provide specifically for the structure and organization of the State. Article 6 of the Charter reads as follows:

"The profession and practice of the Catholic religion, which is that of the Spanish State, shall enjoy official protection. None shall be molested for their religious beliefs or their private practice. No other ceremonies or external demonstrations than those of the Catholic religion shall be permitted."

This text does not depart in any notable degree from those that had prevailed during the past century. The expression is the same and fundamentally the intention

is the same. Nothing in the *Fuero de los Españoles* proposes the persecution or the elimination of whatever religious minorities may exist in the country. Nothing in this article can possibly be construed as reflecting the intention of extirpating by violence other religious persuasions. The one substantial restriction is that concerning public demonstrations of religion. Protestants in Spain under this law may not, it is true, organize street processions or engage publicly, on the street and in the market place, in worship. In part this provision is simply a reflection of the kind of society one finds in Spain. Prudence would dictate that Protestant demonstrations be restricted in communities where ninety-eight percent of the people are Catholic. It is the same logic whereby Catholics in the United States do not propose to organize monster religious processions in communities in this country, where the number of Catholics is very small or where the attitude of the public is such that acts of this kind would be profoundly unwise, productive in all probability of tension and even friction.

The justification of the Charter and its specifically religious terms appears in the following form in the pages of the *Caceta Oficial* of the Cortes:

“The Charter presents a formula, which, without persecution, affirms, and without violence, protects, that religious unity which is the heart and soul of our history, the creation of a hundred generations, the supreme ideal for which the heroes and martyrs of our Crusade shed their blood and laid down their lives.”

It is hardly possible to overstate the importance attached by the present Spanish regime to what is called



“religious unity”. Here again we have an attitude and a view that must be understood in the light of many decades of religious persecution. The outrages against the Church and its clergy, plus the increasingly drastic limitations on everything that smacked of religion in the years prior to the uprising in 1936 produced that violent reaction which so disconcerts non-Catholics and perplexes a good number of Catholics who concern themselves with Spain. Spain is divided on almost everything except religion. The regions of the country: Catalonia, Galicia, Andalucía, the Basque provinces, and Asturias, represent in some cases a different language, another facet of culture and a different social and economic order. Between industrial Bilbao and commercial Catalonia and Andalucía there is a vast difference in the way of life and the social organization. Barcelona and Málaga are as far apart socially and economically as a large western European industrial city is from a Balkan port. Climate and geography; distance and interests all tend to separate Spaniards. The Republic gave free rein to this tendency and came perilously close to splitting Spain irrevocably apart. The regional charters and the campaign for local autonomy emphasized these differences and encouraged them politically. As long as the common bond of religion did not prevail or was not allowed to prevail, this rush toward anarchy could not be stopped. It was arrested violently by the victory of the Nationalists. The restoration of peninsular unity carried with it the crushing of all regional autonomy. The use of the regional languages was either banned or discouraged and every effort was undertaken to recapture the unity and sense of nationhood so seriously jeopardized by the Republic. Many of the so-called excesses and the rigors

with which restrictions have been placed on many of these trends are explainable in terms of the experience of 1931-39.

Few critics of Spain today care to interpret contemporary realities, not as acts and events in space, but as part of a sequence and especially as part of the heritage of persecution, civil war and intolerance. Nothing in the history of the Spanish Church can compare in sheer brutality with the organized, systematic and concentrated persecution it suffered between 1931 and 1936. This story is outside the scope of the present report. It is necessary to mention it to explain the atmosphere of what the Spanish love to call the "moral climate" of Spain today. A nation in convalescence, recovering from a shattering experience and all too prone to recall with bitterness and animosity the experience of those years, it can hardly be expected that there should prevail the same fine tolerance and camaraderie that is the way of life, let us say of Britain or the United States. The martyrdom of the Church in Spain has provoked no wave of sympathy; nor indignant protest from abroad. Spanish Catholics feel deeply that persecution against other religious groups in other countries has invariably been accompanied by the outraged protest of the civilized world. The slaughter, burning, rape and looting that was the story of Spain for years, aroused not an echo abroad, outside of strictly Catholic circles. World complacency during these times of stress and strain has not been forgotten. The precious heritage of religious unity means that Spain is not doomed to internal strife because of the irreconcilable divergences of religion. The problem to the contemporary Spaniard is why he should sacrifice this unity that exists for a wider freedom of public wor-

ship which can easily lead, given the inherent passion of the Spanish temperament, to violence and discord.

How was Article 6 of the Charter received in Spain? In general it was received well. Contrary to the provision of 1876 which was protested by His Holiness Pius IX and by the Spanish hierarchy, the new law received the blessing of the Bishops and was accepted by the Holy See. Some reservations were expressed by a very small minority of Catholics, particularly the Carlists who found it a bit too liberal for their liking. The Protestants themselves found it satisfactory. Apparently there was the general expectation that the new legislation would virtually exclude Protestantism from the country. The provision of the Charter was acclaimed therefore as eminently satisfactory even though not as completely favorable as would be ideally desirable. In the bulletin of the Spanish Evangelical Churches, the new law was received under the heading "A Great Opportunity". (*Carta Circular a los Evangélicos Españoles*, 1945, No. 8-9). The article notes that from reports received from the provinces, the effect of the new law on the Evangelical denominations was entirely favorable:

"In reality, the fact that we can now count on a legal and constitutional basis for our activity will allow us to restore the life of our congregations in many of the more important Spanish cities. It means that after a long and painful period of suffocation a wide and effective door is now opened for us. We realize that it is still not entirely open and we hope for other concessions to the end that we can preach the Gospel with full liberty."



Once again the expression "private worship" was the cause of considerable discrepancy. One school of thought, headed by the Carlists, interpreted it most restrictedly as meaning worship within the home, with none of the trappings of a church, chapel or temple, and without any activity such as collecting funds or carrying on propaganda. The Protestants themselves went to the other extreme and insisted that "private" was to be taken as meaning non-official or non-national, that is unsupported in public as signifying the State.

As a matter of fact this question was decided for all practical purposes in 1945, by the ministerial decree of November 12, which allowed the reopening of Protestant churches. The text of this document is not without significance and may be useful to indicate the state of mind and point of view of the Spanish government:

"At the beginning of the National Movement, it was found necessary to suspend the freedom of worship and consequently close the chapels of non-Catholic groups in Spanish territory, in part because of the hostility of many of the pastors of these churches and secondly to safeguard the essential spiritual unity of the people.

"Since the causes for these measures no longer exist and in view of the need to restore normality in this respect, the removal of the legal restrictions on these dissident groups is authorized by the *Fuero de los Españoles*. Article 6 of this Charter establishes that no one shall be disturbed because of his religious beliefs nor shall there be public demonstrations by other religions than the Catholic. Within these limitations, the dissident groups enjoy tolerance. The

Ministry, therefore, after discussion by the Council of Ministers, establishes the following conditions for such worship:

“1. Non Catholic religious groups may worship freely anywhere in Spanish territory, provided this worship is conducted inside their respective churches, with no public manifestation. The directors of these denominations or the persons in charge of the worship are free to organize religious ceremonies on condition that any ulterior purpose or end is avoided; that is, political relations with illegal groups or anything that is not purely pious or liturgical.

“2. Authorization to open such a church should be made in each individual case to the provincial governor, such authorization to be accorded on the basis of the present provisions. The governor in turn will inform this Ministry. The authorization will be communicated to the person requesting it.

“3. The provincial governors shall protect the worship thus authorized and shall not interfere in the work of the churches nor in their private ceremonies.

“4. The provincial governors shall inform this Ministry of any abuses or violations of the law in this regard.

“Madrid, November 12, 1945.”

The annual meeting of the Evangelical churches of Spain in Madrid in June of 1945, expressed great optimism for the future, which optimism seemed justified by the Ministerial decree just quoted.

The authorizations for the reconstruction of churches and the opening of new ones were given with considerable prodigality. The Bulletin of the Spanish Evangelicals, already cited, states quite baldly that it soon became the practice not to request such authorizations at all:

“There have been no official authorizations since most of the churches have gone ahead without it. In Barcelona the denominations presented a report to the civil governor announcing simply the reopening of the churches. In the light of the determined and unanimous sentiment of the Evangelical minority, he gave up any idea of violence.” (*Carta circular a los Evangélicos Españoles*, 1945. No. 11)

### 3. THE STATE OF PROTESTANTISM

THE growth of Protestantism in Spain, thanks to this policy, has undoubtedly been considerable over the past three years. The Protestant review, *Life of Faith* (August 20, 1947) contains certain information on how the Protestants have not merely rebuilt the churches destroyed during the Civil War or limited themselves to the congregations already in existence, but have gone out actively to win conversions. The following paragraph refers to a single community in Spain, which may be taken as more or less typical:

“There was not a single Protestant in the town when the first place of worship was opened last November (1946). At present (August 1947) the congregation consists of about fifty people, among whom twenty have announced their conversion. The same situation prevails more or less in most parts of Spain and the authorities seem entirely favorable.”

It could not be said that the Spanish government or anyone else did anything that could be construed as persecution of the Protestants. The number of churches has vastly increased. Conservative estimates indicate that there are 165 chapels and churches. Seventeen of these are in and around Barcelona, some eleven in Madrid and the rest distributed over the country. The statistical index (pages 30-31) gives the apportionment as it stands at the present time. It is not the existence of Protestant chapels in Spain that has bothered Spaniards. It is not a will to persecute that animates them; it is rather the

extraordinarily aggressive methods and procedures put into effect over the past few years by Protestants which have aroused the antagonism of many Catholics. The proof that persecution was never either intended or carried out rests not only on the facts already presented, but on such things as the allocation of paper for Protestant reviews and newsheets. *Notas de la Obra Bíblica, Constancia* and *El Eco de la Verdad* were being published freely in Spain during the years when paper was extremely scarce. No act of the State showed the slightest hostility toward the normal, legal activity of the various Protestant denominations. The Protestant editions of the Bible were very far from eliminated. The figures provided by the Protestants themselves confirm this activity. The figures are as follows:

1944: Bibles . . . . .	984	
The New Testament . . .	991	
Parts of the Bible . . . . .	4050	Total 6,025
1945: Bibles . . . . .	<u>1488</u>	
New Testament . . . . .	1807	
Parts of the Bible . . . . .	4286	Total 7,581
1946: Bibles . . . . .	<u>773</u>	
New Testament . . . . .	2668	
Parts of the Bible . . . . .	3710	Total 7,151

In addition there were some 4,993 volumes distributed by private persons in 1946 and 3,467 in 1947. These figures are reproduced in an article on the state of Protestantism in Spain appearing in the Dutch periodical, *De Linie* for October 31, 1947.

This same paper reproduces a letter from a foreign Protestant resident in Spain regarding the religious situation. This may be found also in *Documentation Cathol-*



ique (Paris, August 29, 1948). The text of this letter is extremely interesting and bears quotation:

"I have lived in Spain for the past twenty seven years and have never encountered any economic difficulties because of my religion. My impression is that certainly nothing is done to favor Protestantism here but on the other hand it is not persecuted and the situation is very far from that of oppression. An economic boycott of Protestants because of their faith is something I have never heard of—As to Protestants of Spanish nationality—if there are any, I can say nothing, for I have never met one. The German Protestants who reside in Spain continue to receive normally the *Deutsches Evangelisches Kirchenblatt für Spanien und Portugal*, published in Lisbon. Protestant religious services are held here regularly."

There is little doubt that Protestants in Spain have gone far beyond the limits laid down by the *Fuero* and the decree cited above. In innumerable cases, Protestant services have been held in such a manner as to be clearly visible from the street and serve to attract crowds. There has been a considerable tendency to publish Evangelical literature with a distinctly Catholic cachet, to catch the unwary. Bibles have appeared along the lines of those normally published in the country. Even ecclesiastical approval has been presented in strictly Evangelical publications. Devotion to the Saints, clerical celibacy, devotion to the Blessed Virgin and numerous other practices and doctrines of the Church have been attacked with singular violence in these tracts. (1)

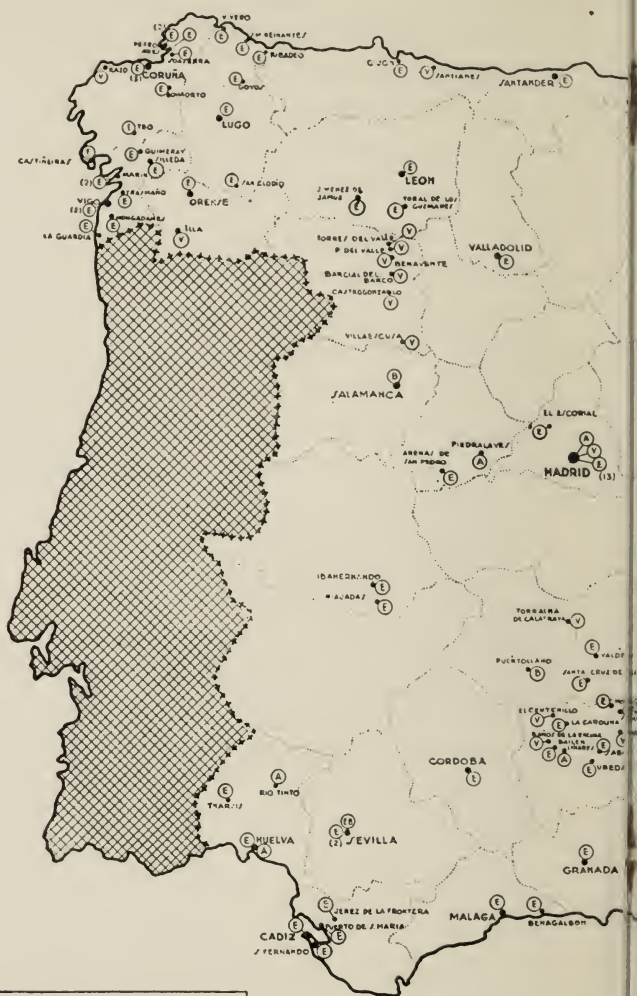
(1) Many of these cases are cited with text in the official organ of the Central committee of Spanish Catholic Action, *Ecclesia*, particularly in the numbers for October 18, November 22, November 29, 1947 and January 17, 1948.

The statement of the Archbishop of Zaragoza, published in *Ecclesia* under date of January 17, 1948 points out that "it is known to us with certainty that the Protestant sects have renewed their activity in this city by distributing books, pamphlets and Bibles. November 23, the day we had set aside for encouraging among the faithful the knowledge and diffusion of the Sacred Books, was taken advantage by them to intensify their propaganda openly and without discretion." The previous year, on the same occasion when the reading of the Bible was encouraged by the hierarchy, Protestant editions had been distributed at the doors of the Catholic churches. The Cardinal Archbishop of Seville in a pastoral of September 8, spoke of the dangers among the humble of Evangelical propaganda, especially the campaign to discredit the belief in the doctrine of Mary Mediatrix. During November and December of 1945 six new Protestant chapels were erected in the archdiocese of Seville and twenty-six in 1946 (2). Other activities equally deplored were the publication of magazines imitating in format and appearance parish publications, and the insistence on selling or distributing such literature at the entrance to Catholic Churches. At the gathering in Barcelona of the delegates to the congress of Marianist Congregations, such literature was distributed at the entrance of the building where the meetings were being held.

An important element in the whole situation is that many of the more aggressive groups do not represent the older Evangelical tradition. Seventh Day Adventists, and the Pentecostal Church have invaded Spain to some extent and the voices of not a few Evangelical ministers

(2) *Gaceta oficial del Arzobispado de Sevilla*, September 10, 1947. pps. 578 seq.

## PROTESTANT CHAPEL



CANARIAS





# AND CENTRES IN SPAIN



have been raised in order that these activities not be confused with what might be called the more normal Protestant bodies. Father Edmond Chavez of Geneva in his excellent little study, *La Situation du Protestantisme en Espagne*, quotes several of these protests. Their tone and content are worth noting. In one case insistence is made that all non-Catholics in Spain should not be lumped together as Protestants, and that only those connected with the Ecumenical Movement deserve this name. Father Chavez cites the case of letters from several Protestant ministers in which they emphasize this source of confusion. One of them states:

“One cannot, to be sure, deny to these sects the benefit of Christian liberty, but we do not wish to be confused with them. They are brethren to be converted. It is often more difficult to come to an understanding with them than with the Catholics. Their activity is responsible for much of the confusion.”

Another Protestant pastor in Spain writes:

“The Adventists—who do not claim to be Evangelicals and whom we do not recognize as such—although few in number, are extremely aggressive. They distribute their literature in profusion, thanks to funds received from America, including tracts and pamphlets——.”

The Swedish newsman, M. B. Hallström, writing in the *Svenska Morgenbladet* of April 17, 1947 points out with some satisfaction that during the “Bible Day” proclaimed by the hierarchy in Spain, young Protestants took full advantage of the opportunity to distribute what the Swedish writer calls “the authentic Scriptures.”

It may be forgiven the Spanish people if they find it difficult to make a clear distinction between Protestantism *vieille école* and the newer sects which have sprung up. The tendency is to put them all in the same category and label them Protestant. It is clear from abundant testimony that many of the old line Evangelicals, especially the Anglicans and Lutherans, look upon these more novel bodies as anarchical and irresponsible. There is no doubt that the intransigence, solid attachment to the Church and above all the deep devotion to the Blessed Virgin have provoked many attacks by Protestants in Spain on the faith of the majority. It would be absurd to deny the essentially anti-Catholic nature of the Evangelical movement; that is that sector of Protestantism in Spain which is not strictly tied in with a foreign legation or embassy or forms a part of a definitely foreign colony resident there. Obviously in this treatment we are not speaking of the Anglicans who frequent the chapel of the British embassy nor of the German speaking Swiss congregation in Barcelona.

The Protestants themselves have acknowledged the strong element of anti-Catholicism in their activities. Pastor Brutsch in his *l'Evangile du Christ: l'Espagne meurtrie et nous*, published at Geneva in 1937 states quite frankly that: "one of the characteristics of Spanish Protestantism is that it is anti-Catholic." Or, if one prefers a more substantial testimony, one may read the following statement in the bulletin of the Spanish Evangelicals, published in 1946:

"That Protestantism constitutes a threat to 'Roman peace' we are the first to admit as a solid fact and an honor for the Evangelical churches."

Further evidence is found in such publications of Spanish Protestantism as the *Escudriñador Bíblico*, issued in Madrid. In the issue for October, 1947 this review, now in its fourth year, contains an article in which the following comments are made regarding Catholicism:

1. The indulgences sold by the priests to the people are simply a trick of the Devil.
2. God never sent saints in order that people adore them.
3. The practice of clerical celibacy is spoken of as a Satanical institution and perversion.
4. Bishops and priests should be free to marry like anyone else.
5. These are but a few of the false doctrines of what the review in question calls the "Apostate Catholic Church."
6. The Bible is full of this apostasy and that God insists that men to be saved abandon Catholicism. (pages 16 to 21)

This publication was issued immediately after the inauguration of a new chapel on the Calle Trafalgar in Madrid. On October 31 a body of students demonstrated against the chapel, denouncing the insults proffered to the Blessed Virgin, the Church and the Saints.

An astonishing footnote to all of this is the claim advanced by some Spanish Protestants that Spanish Catholicism has been perverted by contact and subservience to Rome and that the pristine pure religion of an earlier age was Evangelical. The following quotation illustrates this state of mind:



“At a lecture in Seville, Pastor Santos Molina expressed himself thus: ‘. . . There is a false, or at least an incomplete, conception of the historical truth of Christianity in our beloved country. Biblical Christianity is the original Christianity in Spain. . . . Biblical is the Liturgy of the Gothic and Hispano-Visigothic Church, genuinely national and quite independent of the Bishop of Rome. This Liturgy, later called the Mozarabic, was loved by our people. . . . But the astuteness of the French monks, who came here in the train of the French princesses who married our kings, gradually undermined the basis of our religious uses and ended by replacing them by those of Rome. . . . What bitter fruits Spain has reaped through abandoning the ancient path and following the idolatrous aberrations of the Roman paths. . . .’ The same author subsequently gave a list of famous Spaniards, whom he described without more ado, as Protestants, including St. Teresa, St. John of the Cross, Calderón and Cervantes. After that, señor Molina displayed an equal historical erudition in concluding that side by side with the “Roman and foreign tradition, which always resorted to violence, stands the other tradition. . . .” (Circular Letter to the Spanish Evangelicals, 1945, VIII-IX).

There is deep resentment in Spanish Catholic circles at the pretended evangelization of their country by Protestants. Whatever may be the deficiencies of Spanish Catholics and whatever may be the present miseries in the social and economic order, the overwhelming majority clings fiercely to the traditional religion, so intimately bound up with its history and glories. Much of

this resentment springs from the conviction that when Spain was suffering its martyrdom during the Republic and the Civil War, few Protestant voices were raised to protest the bloody outrages. Allison Peers in his *Spanish Tragedy* recounts this epoch. In his other volume, already cited, on the religious Orders, he devotes one outstanding chapter (VI) to the Orders and the Civil War. Here the whole horrible business is recounted with details and with statistics. One hundred seventy-six priests of the diocese of Toledo murdered. The story has been told but at the time the evidence did not lead men of good faith to rise up in protest against such infamy. *La Civiltà Cattolica* in 1937, (No. IV, pps. 209-224) devotes attention to the Protestant reaction to the wild persecution of Catholicism in Spain. Long before the war Protestant statements were frequent that the time had come for the Christianizing of Spain. At an Evangelical congress in Utrecht in 1927, it was proposed that a Faculty of Protestant Theology be set up in Madrid and translations into Spanish of the lives of Luther and Calvin appeared for distribution. In May, 1936 the Lausanne Committee for the Evangelization of Spain announced that its purpose was to set Spain free of the yoke of Rome. A little bulletin called *Tidings from Spain*, the organ of the Spanish Evangelical Missions, in the issue for September and October, 1944 has this to say about the state of affairs in Spain: "In 1935 the number of illiterates—who in 1907 had formed 60 percent of the population—had been reduced practically to half. Under Franco's regime it is not likely that things are getting better because it is a rule of the Catholic Church to keep people illiterate." This gem of thought

does not tend to endear Protestantism to the Spanish people.

One of the most serious phases of the whole Protestant problem in Spain is the close relationship of Protestant propaganda to politics. We do not propose here to deal with the war period. From 1936 to 1939 everything was abnormal. Legislation did not exist and policy was worked out pragmatically according to the circumstances. There were many cases in which Protestant chapels were closed, as has been mentioned, for security reasons. In other cases Protestant pastors were invited to leave, because of political activity. Each case of expulsion, incarceration or removal from office would have to be examined individually to ascertain its faults or merits. Father F. Cavalli, S.J., in his excellent little study called *Le Condizioni dei Protestanti in Spagna*, published in *Civiltà Cattolica* of April 3, 1948, makes this statement which is absolutely sound, based on the available evidence:

“While it is impossible to go into the legitimacy or the opportuneness of all these measures, one by one, they appear on the whole to be fairly justified. Here again, two things are absolutely certain. First and foremost, there was no question of religious persecution, but only of a reaction against political offenses and hostility to the government, and secondly, no evidence has been produced to show that the least responsibility fell on the Church or that the ecclesiastical authority took any part in the matter.”

It is indispensable, in judging the situation of Spain during and after the Civil War to take into account the high tension, the abnormality, the strong emotions and

the inevitable spiritual aftermath of a devastating war. The newly established government felt bound to chastise those guilty of political crimes. Its own stability and defense depended on rigorous standards until stability could be restored. If those of the Evangelical persuasion found themselves involved from time to time, it is certain that they were prosecuted for political acts and not for religion. The discussion of the legitimacy of this form of conduct by the Franco regime is quite outside the scope of this modest study. Moreover the Catholic Church as such has never taken the slightest part in this sort of thing. A broad, general statement can be made, which is absolutely incontrovertible and that is that at no time during or since the war has the Church as such demanded the punishment of its own detractors or even of the murderers of its priests and Bishops, when their identity is known. It is not likely that a Church which with immense compassion and charity has preferred to forgive those who slaughtered thousands of the clergy and faithful, will go after the heads of a few Evangelical pastors.

The evidence is not always available in documentary form to show that a good deal of the increase in Protestant activity is merely a disguise for political opposition to the regime. This conclusion was stated to the writer orally by the Bishop of Barcelona and he revealed proof from the reports of a number of his clergy. The fact that political opposition finds it possible to arouse the interest of the world by passing for a religious group suffering persecution, is entirely in line with the way things happen in Spain. How much of the increase of propaganda and dissension in such areas as Barcelona and others is



due to political groups is hard to say. That there is a close connection admits of no doubt whatever.

General Franco himself asserted in an interview on August 19, 1947 that Protestants were not subject to persecution, but protected by Article 6 of the *Fuero* and that chapels and churches exist everywhere as under the previous governments. As a matter of fact, the statistics published by the Protestants themselves show that the number of churches has increased considerably since the advent of the Franco regime.

#### 4. THE CATHOLIC REACTION

THE Catholic reaction to the whole situation is expressed perhaps most authoritatively in the Pastoral Letter of September 10, 1947 of Cardinal Segura of Seville. The first part deals with the general problem of the preservation of the Faith. The second part is the one that provoked a very considerable commentary abroad and led to certain criticism of the position taken by His Eminence. In January a local pastor in one of the Protestant chapels of Seville had announced that as the moment was singularly opportune, several new chapels would be opened in the course of the year in the city. The Cardinal agrees sadly that indeed the times are propitious if one is to judge by the number of chapels already opened and the extent to which Protestantism had made headway. The one phrase in the whole pastoral that produced a storm of comment abroad was the following:

“The sad thing is that the request for authorization to erect these chapels is based on Article 6 of the *Fuero de los Españoles*. We believe, without any hesitation, that it would be wise not to authorize further centers of false religion in Spain.”

Naturally the expression “false religion” struck opinion abroad between the eyes. It smacked of intolerance, bigotry and the Inquisition. This is not the place to dwell on the particular word. To Catholics the meaning is extremely plain. Furthermore, the Cardinal’s words were misinterpreted abroad to mean that *all* Protestant churches should be closed. At no place in his statement

is this implied in the least. The proposal is restricted to the suggestion that future requests for authorization be denied by the proper authority, based on the right acknowledged in Article 6 of the Fuero. The reason for this denial is that the number of churches in Spain today for Protestants is more than sufficient to fulfill the needs of the existing Protestant communities. The new ones that are going up are not to meet an existing need, but to propagandize among Catholics and against Catholics. This distinction is very clear, very proper and completely logical. The Cardinal at no time asks that the Protestants be molested, much less persecuted. He is concerned, as the careful reading of the texts reveals quite plainly, with new centers of propaganda and proselytism, directed to winning Catholics away from their faith.

The non-Catholic world also seized on the address of Bishop Zacarías de Vizcarra, delivered on October 15, 1947 at the opening of the Instituto Central de Cultura Religiosa Superior. The accusation was made that the Ecclesiastical advisor to Spanish Catholic Action has issued what was little less than a declaration of open warfare on Protestants, testimony to the intolerance and obscurantism of Spanish Catholicism. This address should be analyzed because it is an authoritative statement by a Spanish Bishop and reflects to perfection the attitude of Spanish Catholics. The text is not long, but a full translation would perhaps be excessive. With clarity and a remarkable sense of humor, Mons. Vizcarra takes up the problem of Protestantism as evidenced in Spain today. What are his points? They run something like this:

1. The Church in Spain is faced by a growing aggressiveness on the part of Protestantism.

2. Not only have former centers and churches been reopened, but many new ones have gone up.
3. In a Madrid suburb a splendid building has just been acquired by the Seventh Day Adventists with funds from the United States.
4. Many pious Catholics have been led astray by Evangelical propaganda.

“There are six branches of the Adventists in America,” Msgr. Vizcarra pointed out, “who await the end of the world at an early date and the return of Our Lord to live and reign with his disciples for a thousand years. If we are to be the recipients of sects, it is to be hoped that we shall be favored with some less aggressive and fanatical than these. I recall how in Buenos Aires the Adventists also established themselves, and performed baptism by immersion in the Rio de la Plata.—The Adventists admit no other form of baptism than through immersion. This will be somewhat complicated in Madrid with the Manzanares River and they may perhaps find it necessary to seek out some appropriate swimming pool.”

Does Msgr. Vizcarra suggest that Protestants be hounded out of the land? Not at all. The rest of the address is devoted exclusively to urging that Catholics become far better acquainted with their Faith; and that the courses about to open serve to fortify the Faith of those who attend and prepare them for an enlightened understanding of their religion.

One of the most important of the pronouncements from the highest ecclesiastical authority is the Pastoral letter of Msgr. Modrego Casás, Bishop of Barcelona, under date of February 20, 1948. The title of this com-

munication is *Unidad Católica y Tolerancia de Cultos*. The problem as posed in general runs along the lines indicated. It is a long and concise exposé of Catholic thought of the matter of tolerance. Obviously this is not the place to treat either of the content of this Pastoral nor the question of the precise form in which the Spanish hierarchy has presented the position of the Church on these matters. Our purpose here is to examine the actual state of affairs in Spain.



## 5. THE SO-CALLED PROTESTANT DISABILITIES

There are certain specific matters that come up frequently in the Protestant charges against Spain and its Catholicism. They may be mentioned in passing as indicative of how frail the basis of some of the accusations are. There is the matter of the Bible. This of course is a very old and hoary thing; that Catholics never read the Bible and that in some curious way the Old and New Testament are kept out of their hands. The criticism from Catholic sources has been against the wide distribution of copies of the Bible obviously slanted against the Church. This is particularly true of the annotated edition of the New Testament by Pastor Faivre which is simply filled with reflections and aspersions on the Church. Before the Civil War the circulation of Evangelical editions of the Bible was enormous. The English and Foreign Bible Society distributed the following number of Spanish language texts, most of them in Spain, in 1930: 243,257 copies; in 1931, 275,656 and in 1932, 258,813; the Scottish National Bible Society in 1930, 33,941; and in 1931, 34,404.

The charge that the Bible has no place in Spanish religious life is absurd. There have been innumerable editions of the Bible in its entirety or in part. The modern edition under the auspices of the splendid *Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos* is a cheap, elegant edition available to the general public. Bible Weeks have been held all over the country. In the single diocese of Vitoria, three such



weeks were announced at one time: At Vitoria, San Sebastian and Bilbao.

A word on the school situation. It is commonly stated that Protestants have no right for the education of their children according to their religious beliefs. The Elementary Education Act of July 17, 1945, is perfectly clear on this point. Article 28 provides for the confessional education of non-Catholic foreigners. Articles 5, 28, 56, 57 and 63 are binding on children of Spanish nationality and provide only for Catholic instruction. This, in reality, is not in the least surprising in view of the nature of the State and its relations to the Church. Protestant schools existed prior to the present regime. They were, as admitted by Protestant writers, almost exclusively devoted to propaganda purposes. Nor was their standard particularly high. Araujo García and Grubb point out the grave deficiencies of these establishments (*op. cit.* pps. 75-76).

The existence of foreign non-Catholic schools is admitted in law. Attendance at public schools is not obligatory according to the law. Spanish Protestants can, if they wish, send their children to private schools rather than the State maintained institutions. If their children attend the public schools, maintained by a people that is some 99 percent Catholic, they can hardly claim that these institutions should be oriented in such a way as to take care of the sensibilities of the 0.037 percent who do not like the official Catholic teachings. Foreign critics who are scandalized at the fact that the State schools of Spain are Catholic are simply the victims of the absurd secularism so prevalent in our own country. In good democratic practice, 99 percent of the people is likely

to have a more determining voice than 0.037 percent of the population. By the same logic, American Jews or Catholics might protest against certain aspects of the public school system in America. If they do not like it, they are invited to go elsewhere and maintain their own institutions. This is precisely what Catholics, Lutherans and others have done. The majority has prevailed in eliminating religion from the schools. The minority has no recourse but to open their own. In the United States, however, that minority is as high as 20 or 25 percent. In Spain, it does not reach one percent. How, in the name of outraged democracy, can it be argued that this tiny minority must be pampered and provided for out of all proportion to importance and place in the general population? An almost entirely Catholic population obviously has the right, under democracy or ordinary logic, to set up institutions that meet the approval of this vast majority. The non-conformists in this case simply have to find a way to provide similar facilities for the security of their own ideas. Nothing in Spanish law forbids this.

Although no formal institution of instruction, registered according to the law, there are Protestant schools in Spain, and they exist among the very tiny communities to afford religious instruction to children of this persuasion who frequent the State schools. (1)

There has been some considerable body of Protestant protest over the matter of marriage and burial. The charge has been made that in Spain a valid marriage must be performed by a priest. The outcry has been principally against the Act of March 12, 1938 which, in fact, did nothing but repeal the Republican legislation of June 28,

(1) Henry Smith Leiper, *Christianity today. A survey of the state of the Churches*. New York, 1947. pp. 90.

1932 which recognized civil marriages alone as valid. A return has been made to the former use of the canonical form as obligatory for Catholics and the civil form for non-Catholics. The latter, after the civil ceremony, might appear before their own pastor, on the condition that at least one of the contracting parties declare expressly not to profess the Catholic faith. In general, non-baptized persons or those baptized as Protestants have no difficulty at all. There are certain complications in the case of mixed marriages, and especially of lapsed Catholics.

Another problem frequently raised is that of burial. In almost every Spanish town and even many villages a second cemetery exists for those who die outside the Church, for non-Catholics and the like. On this score it is difficult to see what real problem is raised.

The notion that Catholic practice is required for official positions or that proof of Catholicity is demanded for government posts is sheer nonsense. There are cases such as that of a professor Araujo at the University of Zaragoza who teaches mathematics and is a Protestant. The university is state maintained yet no obstacle was placed in the way of this particular professor. The restrictions are far less rigid than in Sweden where only members of the State Lutheran Church can be schoolmasters and where other denominations cannot maintain schools of their own.

The real test of Spanish tolerance or intolerance is the treatment accorded the only solid religious minority in the country; the Moslems. Moslems are admitted freely to Spanish institutions. There are students at the Military Academy and Moslems have reached high rank in the army. No difficulty exists whatever in the relations

with this very substantial minority, largely resident in the Spanish Zone of Morocco. The recent pronouncement of General Franco regarding the return of Jews is another case in point.

Besides the tiny number of Protestants, the principal non-Catholic religious groups in Spain are the Moslems and the Jews. There are synagogues in Madrid and Barcelona and Moslem worship is not made difficult anywhere in the peninsula. These two religious groups are far more important than the Protestants. In Melilla and Ceuta, long attached to Spain, both religions are represented by considerable numbers. Neither the Jews nor the Moslems have made the slightest protest regarding their treatment in Spain. If their lot were difficult—legally they occupy the same position as the Protestants—then it would seem logical to presume that there would have been a protest. With the general persecution of Jews elsewhere in Europe, it is extraordinary that Jews in Spain—if they are the victims of persecution—have made no sign of it nor have they associated themselves with foreign Protestants who have discovered such ample evidence of discrimination.

Reference has been made in passing to the field of publications. Protestants suffer little on this score as is evidenced by the expression of the last Evangelical Assembly held in Madrid in 1947 at which time it was decided to request the World Council of Churches in Geneva to aid financially in the task of printing tracts, pamphlets, books and the official bulletin. No indication was given in connection with this request of any obstacles to the printing and circulation of the material.



Comparisons are perhaps odious. Nevertheless it might be well to consider that in progressive countries of the type of Switzerland, there exist curious bits of legislation restrictive of Catholicism—and for historical reasons. Thus it is that the federal constitution of 1874, in Article 50 states that no diocese shall be constituted without the consent of the State. Article 51 forbids completely the establishment of the Society of Jesus in the country or its activity in a teaching or other capacity. This restriction can be extended by the State to other religious communities if it seems fit, or if “there is danger of dissension or disturbance among the religious groups.” Article 52 forbids the establishment of new communities or convents or the reestablishment of those formerly existing.

Restrictions on Catholics in Sweden are extremely severe. The work of the Church is hampered by the existence of anti-Catholic legislation of a most serious nature. In the first place Catholics are forbidden access to a number of official posts and they cannot teach in the State primary schools. A Swede who wishes to enter the Catholic Church must announce his intention in the Lutheran parish. If two Catholics marry they must announce their intention also in a Lutheran Church. If a Catholic travels abroad he must obtain a certificate from the Lutheran pastor for his passport. Property holding is restricted and religious communities cannot be formed freely. Are these restrictions any less irksome and unjust than the ones against Protestants in Spain? Why have the defenders of religious tolerance and liberty in America who charge that there is persecution in Spain not looked into the situation with reference to Catholics in the overwhelmingly Protestant Sweden? Or will they retort that



the number of Catholics is so small that it is impossible to expect special legislation or even consideration for them. In that event, the argument would apply equally to Spain in reverse.

## 6. THE "ANTI-PROTESTANT INCIDENTS"

WE come now to the so-called anti-Protestant demonstrations and incidents which have been seized upon so avidly to show that Spain is a land of persecution and irate intolerance. The facts concerning the incidents have been ascertained with the maximum of care—some on the spot in Spain itself and others through discreet correspondence with Spanish priests and others who are well informed regarding the problem.

Among the accusations laid at the door of Franco and his government is that he is far too tolerant with Protestantism out of fear of offending the rest of the world. The traditionalists would favor a much more rigorous limitation and in a number of their publications attack the government for its leniency. The Traditionalists were equally hostile in the Civil War days when aid was received from Italy. Their idea of the correct procedure is to depend exclusively on the missionary, crusading enthusiasm of Spain, taking from the past the standards for the conquest of the present. As evidence of the thinking of the Traditionalist group, the following extract from one of their pamphlets, distributed after a small Protestant demonstration took place at Rubi in Catalonia, will serve as an illustration:

"We want this anonymous expression of the Spanish people to constitute a protest against the extremely grave situation that has developed as the result of a misunderstood tolerance—in open contradiction with the spirit of the martyrs in the National

Crusade. Spain will return to the religious unity made possible by the Virgin of Pilar. It is the duty of those in high place to extirpate this evil that has found root among us. It is high time that we refuse to allow any Protestant activity on Spanish soil."

After the assault on the Protestant chapel on Calle Trafalgar, a considerable number of mimeographed tracts of the very greatest violence were distributed. The British Embassy used them as the basis of its protest. However, the fact that they were not printed and were unsigned indicates that they were not approved by the State nor carried in the least the imprimatur, so to speak of the regime. As a matter of fact, this case and the others to which reference will be made, were largely protests *against* the Franco government and not solely against Protestants. That is to say, the extreme Right, if one may use the conventional term, used this anti-Protestant agitation as a means for criticizing the regime for its liberalism and leniency toward the minority groups.

The actual incidents that have taken place, as near as one can ascertain include the following:

1. Grenollers, Catalonia, September 21, 1947
2. Barcelona, October 11, 1947
3. Madrid, October 31, 1947
4. Minor incidents in Parets, and Manresa, both in Catalonia, dates not given.

The press comments abroad on these incidents exaggerated them out of all proportion to the reality. Thus the French paper, *Midi-Libre* of Montpellier, (November 6, 1947) stated that Protestant churches in Barce-

lona, Grenollers, Madrid and Seville had been reduced to ashes by frenzied mobs. The statement is untrue in general and in the details. Spain is a country where the destruction of churches became something of an art in the days of the persecution. Nothing of that sort has taken place against the Protestants. The facts, sifted as carefully as possible and from different sources seem to be as follows.

Grenollers is a small Catalan city of about 17,000 inhabitants with something of a reputation for violent political feeling. During the Republic and the Civil War a number of Carlists were assassinated in the town, its Catholic churches burned and its entire clergy murdered. The Baptist chapel occupies the ground floor of a private house at Number 20, Calle Elisabet. This chapel consists of two adjoining rooms and the furnishings were some forty chairs, a rostrum for the reading of the Bible and a bookcase. The rooms had been used before the Civil War as the headquarters of the local unit of the Carlist Requetés—a detail, but an important one in the light of the subsequent events. Since the Requeté as well as his son had been killed during the war, his widow rented the rooms to an inn keeper for his surplus trade. He in turn, in May, 1947 leased the rooms to the Baptists. Up to that time there had been no Protestant church at all in Grenollers. The widow as well as the local Traditionalists protested loudly and long against this profanation of the rooms once used for quite different purposes by their martyred comrade. There was a popular feeling that this was no way to honor the memory of those who had given their lives for God and country. On Sunday afternoon, September 21, at around four o'clock, a num-

ber of Carlists, returning from a meeting, stopped several persons seeking entry to the "temple." The Evangelical gathering had begun under the guidance of a young man from Tarrasa with about thirty persons present. The Carlists interrupted the meeting and discovered among the pamphlets and books in the room several that seemed to them insulting to the Blessed Virgin. One of the books was entitled, *Papa y la Virgen*. It was a story of a young girl named Josefina, the nickname for whom in Spanish is Pepa who prayed to the Blessed Virgin for a favor. An Evangelical is depicted as approaching her to say that this prayer is worthless since she must address God himself directly and through no intermediary. Unfortunately, aside from the doctrine involved, the expression "Pepe" in Spain is a generic term to designate a woman of dubious virtue. To the relatively unlettered Carlists this seemed the supreme insult. They proceeded to slap the pastor, break up the furniture, and toss the literature out the window. The neighbors who were attracted by the noise gathered and in general expressed disapproval of what seemed to them misplaced zeal. The police arrived shortly and order was restored. Protestant services have resumed in this locality and no further disturbances have been reported. It is to be noted that the pastor and the thirty odd persons gathered in the chapel were all Spaniards. No outrage to a foreigner was involved.

The second incident of some importance took place in Barcelona on October 11, 1947. Some thirty Requetés in uniform, on leaving the Cathedral where they had attended a Mass commemorative of the Battle of Lepanto, made their way toward the local Methodist chapel, located on the Calle Ripoll. They entered the building,



and proceeded to wreck the furniture, including a piano. This act of vandalism was strongly disapproved by the ecclesiastical authority and the responsible Requetés were arrested.

The third incident occurred in Madrid, in a large building on the Calle Trafalgar, British property and containing a chapel of considerable size. This chapel, with a seating capacity for 700 was by far the largest in Spain and had been inaugurated on October 17, 1947. After certain attacks on the Blessed Virgin, as reported widely, a group of students decided to visit the chapel to sing the *Salve Regina*. When their entrance was obstructed they proceeded to break in, throw the chairs out the windows and destroy some of the other furniture. They wrote "Viva la Virgen" on the walls of the chapel.

These are the principal incidents. There may have been others of less significance. But even with every concession to their importance, none of the three incidents listed above constitutes a flagrant or violent case of anti-Protestantism. What is most important is that these acts were condemned by the proper ecclesiastical authority; the responsible persons arrested and in every case, those who engaged in the acts belonged to the Requetés. In no instance were the ordinary members of Spanish Catholic Action involved. Rather the contrary. The members of Catholic Action deplored this recourse to violence. A letter from a distinguished Barcelona priest, under date of December 15, 1947 states very emphatically the following:

"On October 31, the Requetés distributed leaflets in Barcelona in which they declared the growth of Protestantism and accused the Franco government

of leniency toward the sects. Several members of Catholic Action undertook to prevent the distribution of this inflammatory literature which called for the suppression of Protestantism. It was considered by every responsible person as a direct and willful incitement to violence. I myself witnessed a most acrimonious discussion between Requetés and members of Catholic Action, the latter seeking to prevent the former from handing out their leaflets at the entrance of the Church of Santa María del Mar."

In these cases as in many others, the foreign press had insisted on generalizations that are not supported by the facts. It is the conviction of a great many well informed persons that the political enemies of the Franco government have taken full advantage of these incidents to whip up passion against Franco, especially in the English speaking world.

The best statement on the attitude of the Church is that contained in the first joint Pastoral of the Spanish Bishops, issued in June, 1948 and devoting considerable attention to the problem of the religious minorities in the country.

"Blessed be the hour—and may God hasten it—in which attacks against the Catholic Church on the part of all religious confessions which acknowledge Christ may cease and in which the efforts of all who believe in Jesus and in the values of the spirit against materialism and its consequences in the social and political order may be joined together."

With this declaration the Archbishops and Bishops of Spain concluded their first joint pastoral since 1936,

which is devoted particularly to Article 6 of the Spanish Charter guaranteeing the right of freedom of conscience in Spain and the right of Protestants to worship.

The introduction is devoted to doctrinal considerations and reminds that the duty of Bishops is to be vigilant for the preservation and purity of the Faith. Questions of religious freedom and toleration are not merely political and social, the pastoral points out, but also dogmatic, involving the right of the Church to protect the integrity of the Faith.

"Jesus Christ founded only one Church," the pastoral states. "A church born centuries later could not be founded by Him, just as a church which does not remain united with the successors of Peter cannot be true.

"For this reason, the faithful are not free to adhere to any church. It is first of all a sacred duty to belong to the only true Church founded by Christ, which vividly stands out and is known for its qualities of being One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic."

"Human society must acknowledge God as Father and revere His power. Thus justice and reason repel the atheistic state."

Turning to the particular circumstances of the Spanish people today, the pastoral points out that non-Catholic Spaniards are in such insignificant number that a public law concerning their position would hardly be necessary, but that there are also in Spain a goodly number of foreigners from predominantly Protestant countries or countries with large Protestant minorities. To protect their rights, as well as those of non-Catholic Spaniards, Article 6 was placed in the Spanish Charter, the pastoral states.

The Spanish Bishops express surprise that in some instances Catholics in other countries have misconstrued this guarantee of freedom of conscience by the Spanish Charter, and the pastoral expresses special appreciation to the Jesuit magazine *Civiltà Cattolica* in Rome for its presentation of the situation of Protestants in Spain.

The Bishops lament the splitting up of Christianity by the multiplication of Protestant denominations and groups, and deplore the manner in which these divisions have interfered with the efficaciousness of the mission of Christianity in the world.

While expressing confidence that the people of Spain will remain true to the Catholic Faith, its teachings and practices, the Archbishops and Bishops observe that this does not mean "that a public campaign of Protestant proselytism and of attack against the Catholic Faith might not endanger certain incautious persons," and that this exigency is to be avoided, not by acts of violence, but by bringing such abuses to attention of public authority and "by strict enforcement of regulations following the fundamental law of the State."

"Faith must never be forced upon people through violence," the pastoral declares. "Charity paves the way and always requires the efficacy of Divine Grace."

While intransigence with respect to the revealed truths of Christ is an essential mark of Catholicism, the Bishops aver this protection of the integrity of the Faith is not "incompatible with serenity, understanding, gentleness and the true charity that Christ teaches us to practice even with respect to our enemies." (1)

(1) Carried under date of June 19, 1948 by N.C.W.C. News Service.



Moreover, Mr. Paul P. Kennedy, writing from Madrid in December, 1948 for the special round up of religious news the world over published by the *New York Times*, makes the following statement:

"There is no available evidence that these cases of vandalism followed a pattern or had been instigated by governmental or religious organizations. To investigators they appeared to be the result of outbreaks of fanaticism that in some cases had been inspired by violently anti-Protestant pastoral letters. In nearly all instances, the Government provided indemnity for the damaged churches and in some instances placed effective guards around various chapels for added protection." (2)

The full text of this report on religion in Spain, although marred by several errors and misuse of terms, is included as an appendix of this report.

(2) *New York Times*, December 25, 1948.



## A P P E N D I X

### SPAIN

(New York Times, December 25, 1948)

*By* PAUL P. KENNEDY

Alleged religious persecution in Spain of a Protestant minority must be viewed against a background of the country's laws.

In Article Six of the *Fuero de los Españoles*, the so-called Spanish Bill of Rights, the right of all sects to worship, with certain restrictions, is set forth. In Article Thirty-five, however, it is made illegal for a foreign sect to proselytize among Spanish Roman Catholics.

Thus if a pastor or official of a foreign sect maintains, as hundreds have done since the days of George Borrow, that the prohibition of proselytism is an erroneous and unfair interpretation of freedom of worship, then he can point to widespread persecution of Protestant minorities. If, on the other hand he would interpret the law in its strictest sense then he can point only to the relatively few cases of vandalism these last two years against Protestant churches. There were about ten or twelve of these.

There was no available evidence that these cases of vandalism followed a pattern or had been instigated by governmental or religious organizations. To investigators they appeared to be the result of outbreaks of fanaticism that in some cases had been inspired by violently anti-Protestant pastoral letters. In nearly all instances the Government provided indemnity for the damaged

churches and in some instances placed effective guards around various chapels for added protection.

It must be noted that this consideration for freedom, in a sense, of religious worship applies to the Government but not to the Spanish Catholic Church, itself, which has been consistently hostile to Protestant encroachment.

There are about 160 Protestant churches in Spain, most of them concentrated in Galicia and Jaen Provinces. Madrid itself has nine, exclusive of the Official Church of England Chapel. There are, conservatively, 15,000 Protestants in Spain embracing a variety of sects including Baptists, Plymouth Brethren, Seventh Day Adventists, Scotch and Irish Presbyterians and the Spain Reformed Church. . . .

The Roman Catholic Church is, by order of the Fuero, the official church in Spain. Its chief spiritual problem of the moment seems to be in bolstering up of the widespread falling morality in keeping with the universal trend. The Church's chief physical problem is the expression of a growing social consciousness without intruding unduly on political grounds. Despite isolated instances to the contrary, the Church in Spain has, over the past few years, become less and less political.

By RICHARD PATTEE

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